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IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF
THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

A
VALEDICTORY SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

The Protestant Episcopal Church,

AT

SHERBROOKE, IN THE DISTRICT OF ST. FRANCIS,

EASTERN TOWNSHIPS OF LOWER CANADA,

ON OCCASION OF HIS

RESIGNATION OF THE PASTORAL CHARGE

IN THAT PLACE.

BY THE REV. EDWARD PARKIN,

LATE

Rector of Sherbrooke & Lennoxville,

AND ONE OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE VENERABLE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION
OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

AN ADDRESS FROM THE PARISHIONERS OF SHERBROOKE
TO THE AUTHOR.

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TO THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CONGREGATION
OF SHERBROOKE, LOWER CANADA,

THE FOLLOWING
S E R M O N,

DELIVERED ON OCCASION OF HIS RESIGNATION OF THE PASTORAL CHARGE
AMONGST THEM, HASTILY PREPARED, BUT PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

Is affectionately Inscribed,

BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND AND LATE PASTOR,

EDWARD PARKIN.

SERMON.

2 CORINTHIANS ii. 15, 16.

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?”

I ADDRESS you, my Brethren, for the last time, as the authorized Pastor of this congregation ; and I do so with mingled sensations of pleasure and of pain, of satisfaction and of regret. The ministry of the word of life is at once the most honorable, the most arduous, and the most responsible office which can possibly fall to the lot of man. The assumption, therefore, or the resignation of its duties amongst a people must necessarily be attended with feelings of no ordinary interest in a mind duly alive to its importance. To such, indeed, as select it as a profession (as it is to be feared too many do) with no higher views than those with which others make choice of the practice of the law, or of physic, of the army or navy, as a respectable source of livelihood, neither the one nor the other may excite any strong emotions. But whoever is seriously impressed with the all-important consequences of the acceptance or rejection of the Gospel Message, of the

improvement or neglect of the means of grace and salvation developed in, what the Apostle calls, “the *glorious* Gospel of the blessed God,”—viz. the eternal happiness or the everlasting misery of those to whom it is sent, cannot contemplate the future or look back upon the past without feelings of indescribable solicitude. In the latter case, that of *resignation* of the pastoral charge,—the difficulties which have beset his path, the infirmities with which he has been encompassed, and the want of success which has attended his ministry, will all furnish matter for tearful regret; while, on the other hand, any encouragements he may have met with, and such instances of the beneficial results of his labours as may appear, together with the consciousness that his sincere and well-meant endeavours, as far as he has laboured faithfully in his calling whether successful or otherwise, will meet the approbation of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls,—will all minister subjects for gratitude and for rejoicing.

Such are the views which the Apostle, in the text and in the preceding verse, appears to have entertained of the Christian ministry. “Now thanks be unto God,” says he, “which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?”

The particular bearing of some of the Apostle’s expressions in the text may not perhaps at first appear

to some of my audience. To the Corinthians, however, to whom the Apostle writes, the allusions in the text were familiar, as they will also be to such of my hearers as are at all conversant with classical literature. The apostle evidently has in view one of those pageants which were of frequent occurrence in the Grecian and Roman States, called a "Triumph," which is thus described by a learned commentator upon this passage:—"A *triumph* among the Romans, to which the Apostle here alludes, was a public and solemn honour conferred by them on a victorious general, by allowing him a magnificent procession through the city. This was not granted by the senate, unless the general had gained a very signal and decisive victory, conquered a *province*, &c. On such occasions the general was usually clad in a rich purple robe interwoven with figures of gold, setting forth the details of his achievements: his buskins were beset with studs of gold, and he wore a crown, which at first was of silver, but was afterwards of pure *gold*. In one hand he had a branch of *laurel*, the emblem of *victory*, and in the other his truncheon. He was carried in a magnificent chariot, adorned with ivory and plates of gold, and usually drawn by two *white horses*. Other *animals* were also used. When Pompey triumphed over Africa his chariot was drawn by *elephants*; that of Mark Antony by *lions*; that of Heliogabalus by *tigers*; and that of Aurelius by *deer*. His children either sat at his feet in the chariot, or rode on the chariot horses. To keep him humble amidst these great honours, a slave stood at his back, casting out incessant railings and reproaches, and carefully enumerating all his vices, &c. *Musicians*

led up the procession, and played triumphal pieces in praise of the general; and these were followed by young men, who led the *victims* which were to be sacrificed on the occasion, with their horns gilded, and their heads and necks adorned with ribbands and garlands. Next followed *carts* laden with the spoils taken from the enemy, with their horses, chariots, &c. These were followed by the *kings, princes, or generals*, taken in the war, loaded with chains. Immediately after these came the *triumphal chariot*, before which, as it passed, the people *strewed flowers*, and shouted, *Io, triumphe!* The triumphal chariot was followed by the *senate*, and the procession was closed by the priests and their attendants with the different sacrificial utensils, and a *white ox*, which was to be the *chief victim*. They then passed through the *triumphal arch*, along the *via sacra* to the *Capitol*, where the victims were slain. During this time, all the temples were opened, and every altar *smoked* with offerings and incense. The people of Corinth were sufficiently acquainted with the nature of a triumph. About ninety years before this, Lucius Mummius, the Roman Consul, had conquered all Achaia, destroyed Corinth, Thebes, and Chalcis; and by order of the Senate, had a grand triumph, and was surnamed *Achaicus*." In reference to these triumphs it is further to be observed, that on their conclusion, the conqueror spared such of the captives who had been led in chains to grace the triumph as he thought proper, while he ordered the others, such as had often rebelled and broken leagues and covenants, to be put to death. Thus the *smoke* of the victims, and the *incense* offered on such an

occasion, together with the *odour* of the *flowers* profusely scattered throughout the city, would fill it with their *perfume*, and prove to such of the captives as were spared "the savour of life unto life," issuing in their liberation from bonds and deliverance from death, while to the others the same odours would prove "the savour of death unto death," being followed by their speedy execution. Alluding to this, the Apostle, in the text, says, "We (i. e. the Apostles of Christ, the ministers of the Gospel) are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." We have fulfilled his will in faithfully proclaiming the Gospel, and thus diffusing the *odour* of the *name* and *doctrine* of Christ; and as he has determined that those who *believe* shall be *saved*, and those who *believe not* shall *perish*, we are as equally acceptable to him, though we unsuccessfully preach the Gospel to some who obstinately reject it, and so *perish*, as we are in preaching to others who believe and are *saved*. "To the one," says the Apostle, "we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"

The doctrines then, my brethren, to be gathered hence are—

I. That the faithful discharge of the duties of the Gospel Ministry, whatever be its result in our hearers, will meet the approbation of God.

II. That if the Gospel do not prove to us "the power of God unto salvation," it will inevitably prove the means of our destruction, according to our Saviour's declaration,—“This is the condemnation, that

light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And,

III. That without Divine assistance, the Ministers of Christ are insufficient for the discharge of the duties of their office, and that our sufficiency for it is of God only. "Who is sufficient for these things?" Upon each of these points we shall offer a few remarks, in illustration of the text.

I. We gather from the text, that the faithful discharge of the duties of the Gospel Ministry, whatever be its result in our hearers, will meet the approbation of God.

The ministerial office is one of the highest dignity. "Now, then," says the Apostle, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God* did beseech you *by us*, we pray you *in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God." To be so intimately connected with the Almighty, as to become as it were his confidential agents, is an undertaking in the highest degree honorable. The redemption of mankind is the most illustrious of all the Divine operations, and that by which the greatest glory will redound to God. In no other manifestation of himself is the Deity so fully, so visibly, and so gloriously exhibited. To be employed then to carry on a work of this nature,—a work which displays in so extraordinary a manner the glory of the Divine perfections, must be an honor far greater than words can express. But, different from all other honors in its magnitude, it is different also in its effects on those who rightly receive it. Widely opposed to the haughtiness, pomp, and selfishness which too often accompany

worldly honors, and sometimes invade also those secular dignities which have been attached to ecclesiastical office, it is a dignity with which all kinds of self-consequence are incompatible ; a dignity which imperatively demands in all who aspire to it the deepest humility, and an unfeigned condescension to men of low estate, accompanied with a sincere desire to please all men for their good to edification.

But not only is the Gospel Ministry an office of dignity, and an undertaking highly honorable ; there is also something peculiarly *awful* in it. Those engaged in it are brought, as it were, into close connexion with God. He makes them partners with himself in a work which, in its consequences to mankind, is most momentous. They are " ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." " Moreover," says the Apostle, " it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Ministers cannot indeed think too much of the sacred character of the office which they have undertaken, and the near alliance into which it introduces them with God. Their vocation possesses a solemnity peculiarly its own, and demands infinitely more seriousness, faithfulness, and attention, than are required in the performance of the duties of any other station whatever. While, therefore, the minister of Christ is ever studious of the welfare of the household committed to his care as a faithful and wise steward, attending upon every duty connected with his office in its season, he is more imperatively called upon to feed the flock of God, over which he is made overseer, with wholesome food, nourishing them with sound doctrine, and feeding them with the sincere milk of

the word, that they may grow thereby. He is not to be "as many which *corrupt* the word of God;" neither is he to "shun to declare unto them the whole counsel of God,"—not those parts only which may seem to favour their preconceived opinions and prejudices, and to tally with their favourite systems. His commission is—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the *Gospel* to every creature,"—the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and not a mutilated one, to accommodate the errors and the infirmities of his hearers, from a fear of giving offence, knowing that "the fear of man bringeth a snare." This is his part: the consequences are to be left with God, and He has declared, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "Thou shalt speak *my* words unto them," is the Almighty's command to Ezekiel, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." And again, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

In strict accordance with this declaration, the Apostle asserts in the text, that God's ministers, under the New Testament dispensation, in "making manifest the savour of his knowledge," by preaching "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the

Greeks foolishness ; but unto them that are saved, Christ the wisdom of God, and Christ the power of God,"—"are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." Christ's name, that name which is as ointment poured forth, on their lips, and his grace in their hearts, render his ministers pleasing to God, "in them that are saved,"—who yield to be saved by grace, and in whom God's rich mercy is magnified, being called by him to the faith and privileges of the Gospel, and accepting that call to the glory of God ; and also "in them that perish,"—in whom his justice is displayed in punishing their obstinate infidelity ; and, though *they* are not gathered, yet are his faithful ministers alike glorious in the eyes of the Lord, who regards not their success so much as their fidelity. While, therefore, we have too frequently to exclaim with grief of heart, "Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ?" and to say with the Prophet, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain ;" we have also the consolation of adding, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

The next doctrine which arises from the words of the text, as before stated, is—

II.—That if the Gospel do not prove to those who hear it, "the power of God unto salvation," it will inevitably prove the means of their destruction, in accordance with our Saviour's declaration : "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because

their deeds were evil." "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life."

"There are several sayings," says the learned Commentator before quoted, "among the ancient Jewish writers similar to this. In Debarim Rabba it is said, 'As the bee brings home honey to its owner, but stings others, so is it with the words of the law; they are a savour of lives to the Israelites; and a savour of death to the people of this world.' The Apostle's meaning is plain; those who believe and receive the Gospel are saved; those who reject it, perish. The meaning of the Rabbins is not less plain; the *Israelites* received the law and the prophets as from God; and thus possessed the *means of salvation*. The *Gentiles* ridiculed and despised them, and thus continued in the path of death. The same happens to the present day, to those who receive, and to those who reject the Gospel: it is the *means of salvation* to the former, it is the means of *destruction* to the latter: for they are not only *not saved*, because they do not believe the Gospel; but they are *condemned* because they *reject* it. For how can they escape who neglect so great salvation? The *sun*, which nourishes the *tree* that is planted in a *good soil*, decomposes and destroys it, if plucked up and laid on the surface."

The Gospel Message, the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Saviour, is no human invention, which we are at liberty to receive or not with impunity; no daily or common-place communication,

which may be attended to or not, without danger or inconvenience. No; it is "the testimony of God." It is a message from the Sovereign and only Potentate to a rebellious world; and on the mode of its reception depend all our hopes and fears for eternity. We are "saved with an everlasting salvation," if we receive it; if we reject it, we are for ever lost.

We find in the text the two descriptions of persons distinctly recognized, which are every where prominent in the Scriptures under the designations of the righteous and the wicked, the just and the unjust, the sheep and the goats; and we find also their portion in the eternal world clearly enunciated—"to the one we are the savour of life unto life, and to the other the savour of death unto death." To whatever subterfuges men may resort to rid themselves of the dread of futurity; however they may argue from the Scripture declaration that "God is not *willing* that any should perish," and from the Apostle's assertion that the Great High Priest of our profession "is *able* to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," that none will be lost; here are the plain statements of Scripture, affirming that some *do* perish, that some *are* lost. "We are a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish;" and again, in the 1st chap. 1st Epistle to Corinthians, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that *perish* foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God:" and, further, in the 4th chap. of this Epistle, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that *are lost*." Jesus Christ has, indeed, given himself "a ransom for *all* to be testified in due season," and has

declared, "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly;"—"and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life;" but, in another place, he complains, "Ye will not come to me," i. e. believe on me, "that ye might have life;" and John the Baptist, his forerunner, expressly says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." If language has any meaning, future punishment is as clearly revealed in the Scriptures as the Sun in the firmament of heaven; if not, man is no longer man, light is darkness, and bitter is sweet.

Do we then take delight in denouncing upon our fellow men the vengeance of Heaven? God forbid! But, with the Apostle, "knowing the *terrors* of the Lord, we persuade men." We rather beseech you by the mercies of God, and *entreat* you to flee from the wrath to come. Deceive not yourselves with a false presumption that no account will be demanded of you, that all will be well at last, however you may live here! Amongst the numerous captives who graced the Roman triumphs, and inhaled the sweet fragrance of the flowers and the incense, many doubtless, like Agag, congratulating themselves that "the bitterness of death was past," soon realized the delusiveness of their hopes, by being consigned to the hands of the executioner, as Agag was hewed in pieces by the sword of Samuel. So many, perhaps, speculating upon the universal efficacy of the Saviour's tonement, that sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour

unto God, without any appropriating act of faith in him producing love and obedience, may be deceiving themselves with the vain hope of impunity for their sins, and after all *perish* in them. No longer, my brethren, cherish this fatal delusion. Be assured that God's word will not return unto him void, but will accomplish that for which it was sent. Where it is not "a savour of life unto life;" it will inevitably prove "the savour of death unto death."

Are these things, indeed, so? Then well may the Apostle ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" This will lead me to the last point of doctrine: viz.

III. That without Divine assistance, the Ministers of Christ are insufficient for the discharge of the duties of their office, and that our sufficiency is of God only.

"Who is sufficient for these things?" Who can recount the numberless difficulties of the pastoral charge? The Apostle seems to answer his own question in the fifth verse of the following chapter. "Not," he says, "that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." This is the language of one who felt the awful responsibility of his office; who dreaded a mistake which might be fatal to his own soul or the souls of his people; in a word, the language of one who trembled to think that "after having preached to others, he himself might be a cast-away." But for the assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and the encouraging idea that we are "labourers together with God," we must utterly despair of success. For what are ministers, and what can they do? They are flesh and blood, like other

men. They are, indeed, stewards of the manifold grace and gifts of God, an invaluable treasure, but they "have this treasure in earthen vessels." So far are they from being able by their own power to enlighten the minds, or change the hearts, of other men, or to strengthen them against their spiritual enemies; that they can do none of these things for themselves. Had they the richest and most varied store of learning, and a perfect aptitude to set it forth for the advantage of others, all would be in vain, if unaccompanied by the influences of God's Holy Spirit.

To *civilize* mankind is a work of great labour, and requires many years, perhaps ages, to accomplish it; but to *spiritualize* them, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, is what unassisted human exertion, however wisely or assiduously employed, cannot possibly effect at any season, under any circumstances, or within any period of time. So inveterate is the native corruption of the heart of man, that no human efforts can remove it; so impregnable are the strong holds of Satan, that they can never be effectually assailed by an arm of flesh, however powerful. The spiritually dead can never be raised by a human voice, or the heart of stone be taken away by human skill. No force of argument, no powers of eloquence, no excellency of speech, no appeals either to our hopes or our fears; no, not even the felicities of heaven, or the terrors of hell, can of themselves convert the soul, or bring a sinner to true repentance and faith. Had the Gospel been committed solely to the care of man, it would have completely failed of its great purposes; no human

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being would have been savingly benefited by it; for, though a blessing infinitely valuable in itself, it would never have been sought after or possessed by any of the human race.

If a delegate from an earthly prince would feel no inconsiderable anxiety upon a subject of difficulty, which involved the temporal welfare of his country, what must that man feel who is "an ambassador for God," and whose celestial message is either "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death," to every individual to whom it is delivered? Had the message of the Christian minister been something familiar, something within the ordinary range of human discovery, he might have hoped to be able to deliver it in a manner becoming its nature; but what must he feel when he considers that he has to teach men upon subjects infinitely surpassing all human conception? If, again, his doctrines had been smooth and pleasing to the natural mind, he might have felt less difficulty: but what must he experience when he knows that his message is utterly opposed to every feeling of the unrenewed soul; that it is "foolishness" to the natural man, and cannot be discerned but by the illumination of God's Holy Spirit? He is authorized to proclaim death and judgment, heaven and hell. He comes to the man of the world, to announce that "whoso loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." He comes to the thoughtless and dissipated to say, "He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth." He comes to the ambitious, the aspirant after temporal honour and exalted worldly connexions, to say, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." He

comes to the lover of wealth to say, "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." He comes to the decent ostentatious formalist to say, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God."

If men were ready to embrace the Gospel as soon as it is proposed to them, and to live according to its precepts and spirit, no small part of the burthen would be removed. But when every thing seems to oppose it; when there is worldliness, and indifference, and pride, and vanity, and evil passion to contend with; when one man *hates* religion, and another *despises* it, and another openly *opposes* it, the difficulty must be greatly enhanced.

There are, besides, often special difficulties of a local nature: a factious spirit excited; "grievous wolves have entered in, devouring the flock;" heresies may abound; apostacy from the truth may have deluged the fold. To these may be added a minister's consciousness of his own personal defects, of which, if he be at all spiritually minded, none will be more sensible than himself. There needs but a transient glance at the insufficiency, the weakness, the inconsistencies which mark the conduct of the best of men, to furnish sufficient evidence of the anxiety which a faithful minister must inevitably experience when he duly considers the defects of his own character, and their possible operation upon the eternal welfare of his own flock.

But not to multiply words upon a subject of almost exhaustless fecundity, allow me to bring before you, in the nervous language of a venerable clerical friend in England, one instance of the difficulties of the Christian ministry. "Come, then, my hearers, with me, and I will introduce you into the chamber of a dying sinner. Behold his deplorable situation! I have been sent for by his affectionate relatives to administer spiritual consolation to his mind, for the reception of which, as you perceive by his answers to my questions, he is wholly unprepared. You clearly discover his unawakened state; and that, though there is but a step between him and death, and, according to the Scriptures of truth, but another between him and everlasting misery, yet he is unalarmed and insensible of danger. If I deal plainly with him, if I sound in his ears the tremendous declarations of Scripture, which are appropriate to cases like his,—if I tell him that "the wages of sin is death," and that without repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, he must perish for ever,—every word I speak will be a dagger to the hearts of the weeping friends who surround his bed, and they will brand me for a cruel and unfeeling wretch, and (what is still worse) perhaps I may be the means of hastening the awful moment of his departure, which appears to be at hand, by exciting his apprehensions, and shaking his enfeebled animal frame. Yet, on the other hand, if I soothe him with anodynes, when I ought to administer stimulants or emetics, if I tell him of peace when God says there is no peace; I lead his soul into un-

avoidable destruction, deceive those who stand around him, prove unfaithful to my charge, and so endanger my own soul. Tell me, ye men of wisdom, what path am I to pursue in this dilemma? You hesitate not to answer, Be faithful, and leave the consequences to God. The advice is certainly good; but you see the difficulty of acting in conformity with it."

This, my brethren, is no fanciful picture; it is of every-day occurrence in populous parishes. Who then would not exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Here, however, is our consolation amidst our difficulties, that if we are faithful, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." But, with every encouragement, will any of you then, my brethren, envy us our office, or our slender temporal provision? I believe not.

I have dwelt much longer on these topics than I had intended; but I must trespass upon your patience a little longer, and, as I may never address you in this place again, I hope for your indulgence while I endeavour to draw two or three brief inferences from the subject, and conclude by taking my leave of my present charge. How deeply interesting to both ministers and people is the subject we have discussed!

1st.—To Ministers.—Did *we*, my brethren, keep constantly in view the awful consideration, that every service in which we engage will be productive of eternal advantage or eternal loss to our hearers, how earnest should we be in our exhortations and appeals to their consciences, how careful to dispense the bread

of life aright, how cautious of hindering the good effects of our ministry by our own conduct and conversation!

2nd.—To the People.—Were the minds of our hearers deeply impressed with this view of the Gospel Ministry, how anxious would they be to treasure up in their memories the instructions they receive, how studious in their endeavours to practise the duties enjoined upon them, and how highly would they esteem us in love for our work's sake! And,

Lastly. How should the conviction of our own inability lead both ministers and people to seek help from above by earnest and importunate prayer, seeing our sufficiency for the right discharge of our mutual duties is of God only, and that in him alone have we "righteousness and strength." Thus, and thus only, shall we have any prospect of attaining the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls, and that the ministry of the Gospel will prove unto us "the savour of life unto life."

And, now, my brethren, under peculiar circumstances, I feel myself called upon, on the present occasion, to deviate from my usual course of making *myself* as little prominent as possible in my ministrations, by bringing before you some circumstances of a personal nature relative to myself, and connected with my present act of resignation of the pastoral charge amongst you. Sent hither by my superiors in office, contrary to my own inclination and against my wishes decidedly expressed on the subject, when scarcely recovered from a state of extreme corporeal debility,

induced by a severe attack of disease of many months continuance, and attended by an almost total prostration of mental energy, to execute the arduous duties of the ministerial office amongst you, at a season of emergency, and under circumstances of peculiar difficulty well known to you, I have failed, it would appear, in effecting the objects for which I was delegated, and am now, equally against my will, dismissed from my charge, and recalled from my official engagements as a Missionary under the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This announcement some of you will doubtless hear with surprise, having understood, and that not without reason, (a satisfactory explanation of which shall be given you on a more fitting occasion, and in a more suitable place) that I had *voluntarily* resigned my charge. I have *not* done so; but I lately received a communication from the Venerable the Arch-Deacon of Quebec in the following words:—

“I have received a letter from the Bishop’s Chaplain, who is with his Lordship at York, conveying to me the information that the Board of the Society P. G. F. have, in consequence of the state of health in which you have been for some time past, and the difficulties which have occurred in your Ministry, passed an order for your recall, at the same time assigning to you a pension of £80. per annum, after your return home, to continue till you are pronounced capable of exercising the duties of your profession; and a grant of £100. in order to enable you to leave the country.”

Of my capacity or incapacity to discharge the duties

of my profession, you, my brethren, who have attended my ministry more or less regularly for nearly three years, are the best judges, and to you, however conscious of my own deficiencies, I fearlessly appeal, with this addition to your means of judging,—that all that you have yet heard and are now hearing, has been composed and written since about eight o'clock yesterday morning, it being, while I now write, nearly midnight. What the *difficulties* are which have occurred in my ministry I am left to conjecture, no complaint having, to my knowledge, been either preferred or proved against me, and no opportunity of defence having been afforded me. I apprehend, however, that the difficulties alluded to, had their origin long before I came hither in the conflicting claims of the two Churches comprised within this Mission, and that they are by no means likely to come to a speedy termination. To this may also, perhaps, be added, a disappointment on the part of those who sent me hither, in my not having succeeded, to the extent of their expectations or of my own wishes, in attaching to orthodoxy and to the Church many of those who, with my predecessor in office, have embraced what *we* consider erroneous doctrines. Perhaps I have not displayed sufficient energy in combating their system. This I am willing to admit. I dislike controversy. I do not possess controversial talents; and I certainly have felt no disposition to imitate the example of one who occasionally occupied this place, in fulminating anathemas and dealing out damnation to all who, however conscientiously, differ from us in sentiment. At the same

time I am satisfied that no one will charge me with having shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, or having smoothed down obnoxious doctrines in order to render them more palatable to dissentient members of the community. What I sincerely believe to be the truth, I have honestly and fearlessly, and, I hope, charitably, however feebly, maintained; nor will any one, I think, accuse me of having this day softened the denunciations of Divine wrath, to conciliate those who differ from me, however it might seem to be my interest to do so, at a time when I have a maintenance to seek amongst you. That I can accept the annuity proposed, under the conditions annexed to it, when I am as capable of duty as most Clergymen in the Province, is out of the question. My views are at present directed to the education of youth, or employment in official duties in the neighbouring States, where the Primitive, Apostolical, Episcopal Church at present exists and flourishes in a state of purity almost unknown elsewhere, and where the Liturgy has been curtailed of several redundancies, and otherwise prudently adapted to more modern times and circumstances. There, unconnected with the State, and divested of the abuses which have grown out of the system of patronage in England, in the evils of pluralities, non-residence, sales of advowsons and presentations, &c. the Church prospers, her congregations are numerous and devout, her edifices commodious and elegant, her Clergy pious, diligent, and exemplary,—the choice of the people, by whom they are respected and comfortably maintained.

And now, Brethren, I take my leave of you, as the occupant of this pulpit, beseeching you to make all due allowance for the difficulties I have had to contend with,—for my misfortunes and infirmities,—for my errors and failings. As far as I have been enabled to teach you “the good and the right way,” may you, by Divine grace, be disposed and enabled to walk therein unto all well-pleasing; and may my humble labours, with all their defects, of which I am not unconscious, prove to you all “the savour of life unto life,” and to none of you the awful alternative of “death unto death.”

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

Now to God the Father, &c.

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APPENDIX.

TO THE REVEREND EDWARD PARKIN,

Late Rector of Sherbrooke and Lennoxville

IN THE INFERIOR DISTRICT OF ST. FRANCIS, L. C.

DEAR AND REV. SIR,

We, the undersigned, being the Parishioners forming the congregation of the Episcopal Church, and others, having heard with great regret that you have been dismissed from your charge as our Pastor, by reason, as it is alleged, of your incapability of performing your official duties as such, feel it our duty to come forward, and, in the most unequivocal manner, to state our real sentiments thereon.

That you have, during the three years you have been with us, conducted your official duties as our Minister to the credit of our pulpit, where we have at all times heard you with unspeakable pleasure and delight; that your discourses have been most edifying to us all, both from the strong orthodox tenets which you have ever maintained, and the unceasing pains you have ever used to inculcate the same into the

minds of your hearers; and that your attention at all times to the sick and dying has been kind and unre-mitted—are [facts which no unprejudiced mind can gainsay. No, Sir, we have had both ocular and auricular demonstration of your unwearied discharge of your duties, and of your abilities as a Clergyman of the Church of England, and can only add that you have ever had [our entire satisfaction and approbation as such. God knows that the malicious reports which must have given rise to your unwarrantable dismissal from this parish, *must be such*, and are not founded in truth, as we one and all can and do hereby declare; and that so far from your being ever incapable of performing your clerical duties, or official functions, on the contrary, we have ever considered you, as a Gentleman and Clergyman possessing the most brilliant talents, as your Sermons will clearly evince to every unprejudiced mind; and we are certain that they cannot be excelled in their composition, nor have they, nor can they be, in theological oratory; and in that capacity do say, with the immortal bard, (without any disparagement to any of your brethren) that “take you for all in all, we ne’er shall see your like,” in *our* pulpit “again.”

That you are about to leave us, we do most sincerely deplore; but, Dear Sir, you carry with you the most heartfelt gratitude and unfeigned good wishes of us all; and, in whatever part of the globe it may be your destiny to be cast, we hope He who sees and knows all hearts will protect and bless you, and your amiable lady and family, with health and prosperity.

Wishing you a speedy and prosperous voyage to your native land, we bid you "Farewell," and hope you and yours may ever fare well.

Sincerely, Dear and Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient Servants,

&c. &c. &c.

SHERBROOKE, ST. FRANCIS,
October 13th, 1832.

N. B. The above (in substance, some expressions too flattering and complimentary for the public eye, having been omitted) was signed by seventy-four persons in the immediate vicinity of the *Sherbrooke* church, it not having been more remotely known; and having received the refusal of only four persons, whose *signature* would have been less creditable to my *orthodoxy* than their silence. Many of the expressions *retained* are much too flattering, and I may perhaps be accused of vanity in making them public. Without pretending to be less influenced by personal vanity than my neighbours, I must be allowed to say, that they never would have been made public by my own act, under any other circumstances than those in which I am unmeritedly placed.

E. P.